

XXVIII. *An Account of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, during Forty Years, in the Parish of Blandford Forum, Dorset. Communicated by Richard Pulteney, M. D. F. R. S.*

TO DR. WATSON, F. R. S.

S I R,

Read Mar. 19,  
1778. **A**S the subjects of the following tables have been much discussed of late, I take the liberty of putting these into your hands, encouraged thereto by your assurances, when I had the pleasure of seeing you last in town, that they might not improperly be laid before the Royal Society. If upon inspection you should continue to think so, you will do me the honour of presenting them.

Exclusive of general curiosity, I was also induced to examine the register of this place, in order to determine how far the general opinion, which gives the credit of extraordinary salubrity to this country, was founded on fact, as far as that could be proved by this mode of examination. I found that the register had been kept with  
sufficient

sufficient accuracy in the usual method; that, since the recovery of this place from the dreadful fire of 1731, scarcely any new houses had been built, at least on any new site; that no fluctuation in the number of inhabitants from the introduction of any new manufactory, or from any other apparent cause, had taken place; and was therefore led to conclude, that the result might prove a tolerably fair one, and more especially upon finding the excess of the baptisms above the burials so small as it appears to be.

In the year 1773, when these tables were drawn up, I also procured the number of the people to be taken; by which it appeared, that there were 446 families, reckoning a workhouse of 44 persons, and three schools containing 92, as four families only, which gives nearly  $4\frac{3}{4}$  to a family. The whole number of souls in the parish was found to be, males 1174, females 936, total 2110; but it must be remarked, that in this number were not included any of the inhabitants of the close adjoining villages of St. Mary, Blandford, Brianston, or Langton.

From an inspection of table the first it will be seen, that  $55\frac{3}{4}$  is nearly the average of deaths for 40 years; and the average of the last ten years will appear to be 54: hence, taking 55 for the average number, which also will be seen to be the exact number of burials in the year

year preceding that of the survey, it will be seen that about 1 in 38 or 39 dies yearly; and, as it can scarcely be doubted, that the errors of a survey must be on the side of omission, it may not be too much to allow 1 in 39 only.

From this result, therefore, it is manifest, that although the salubrity of this place does not equal what we read of some particular villages in the North of England, or of the district of Vaud, yet it turns out very much in favour of the general opinion, and very far beyond that of London and larger towns, where the number is found to be from 1 in 20 to 1 in 26 or 28.

I am, &c.

TABLE I. A table of the baptisms, marriages, and burials, during forty years, in the parish of Blandford Forum.

	Baptisms,			Marriages.	Burials,				Baptisms,			Marriages.	Burials,		
	Males.	Females.	Total.		Males.	Females.	Total.		Males.	Females.	Total.		Males.	Females.	Total.
1733	39	33	72	33	27	27	54	1753	22	24	46	24	54	42	96
1734	35	32	67	27	26	20	46	1754	36	18	54	18	24	38	62
1735	34	25	59	24	17	26	43	1755	30	21	51	8	35	39	74
1736	39	22	61	27	29	17	46	1756	35	23	58	23	46	40	86
1737	24	52	76	29	36	29	65	1757	21	11	32	17	29	25	54
1738	38	29	67	30	26	25	51	1758	24	29	53	23	15	23	38
1739	31	27	58	15	25	30	55	1759	20	29	49	13	22	32	54
1740	25	22	47	14	33	31	64	1760	24	25	49	19	35	15	50
1741	21	16	37	18	46	56	102	1761	35	20	55	24	28	15	43
1742	34	24	58	20	36	28	64	1762	17	26	43	18	32	26	58
1743	22	21	43	33	27	27	54	1763	30	16	46	26	15	20	44
1744	32	32	64	23	16	18	34	1764	38	32	70	24	24	26	41
1745	20	24	44	7	23	26	49	1765	38	30	68	18	37	28	65
1746	21	29	50	24	21	26	47	1766	22	25	47	17	50	54	104
1747	21	27	48	18	21	31	52	1767	32	25	57	20	12	21	33
1748	28	19	47	26	34	33	67	1768	23	30	53	15	26	33	59
1749	26	32	58	28	15	25	40	1769	39	24	63	25	23	23	46
1750	24	29	53	26	23	23	46	1770	23	31	54	20	19	28	47
1751	26	19	45	18	22	27	49	1771	28	25	53	20	27	19	47
1752	27	33	60	8	21	26	47	1772	29	31	60	12	21	34	55
	567	547	1114	448	524	551	1075		566	495	1061	384	571	581	1156

Total

*Baptisms, &c. at Blandford Forum.*      619

Total baptisms.		Marriages.	Total burials.	
Males	1133	832	Males	1099
Females	1042		Females	1132
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	2175			2231
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The baptisms among the Dissenters are brought into this account only during the last ten years, males 39, females 54, total 93: if therefore the same proportion is taken for the first-three decennial periods, the total of the baptisms will amount to 2454.

Small-pox years, of which distemper died as underneath:

In 1741	-	76
1753	-	40
1766	-	44
		<hr/>
		160
		<hr/>

In the year 1756, among the burials, 18 were of soldiers, who died during the time of the encampment.

This table does not include the close adjoining villages of Langton, Brianston, and Blandford St. Mary.

**TABLE II.** The annual average of baptisms and burials in the four decennial periods of the foregoing table, taking among the baptisms 93 in each period for the number among the Dissenters, which appeared to be the exact number baptized in the fourth period.

Annual average of the baptisms in the			Annual average of the burial in the		
first ten years,	$69\frac{1}{2}$	695	first ten years,	59	590
— second ten years,	$60\frac{1}{2}$	605	— second ten years,	$48\frac{1}{2}$	485
— third ten years,	$58\frac{1}{5}$	583	— third ten years,	$61\frac{1}{2}$	615
— fourth ten years,	$57\frac{1}{5}$	571	— fourth ten years,	54	541
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In the 40 years,	$61\frac{1}{4}$	2454	In the 40 years,	$55\frac{1}{4}$	2231
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The excess of baptisms over the burials in forty years, 223.

TABLE III. Shewing the whole number of burials in each month, and each quarter of the year collectively throughout the whole of the above period, disposed in two columns, in the latter of which, those who died of the small-pox are excluded, serving to illustrate the different salubrity of the seasons.

Winter.			Summer.		
January	220	204	July	146	145
February	218	200	August	144	144
March	223	195	September	165	162
	<hr/> 661	<hr/> 599		<hr/> 455	<hr/> 451
Spring.			Autumn.		
April	193	170	October	172	171
May	218	184	November	174	170
June	190	166	December	168	160
	<hr/> 601	<hr/> 520		<hr/> 514	<hr/> 501

